

## **God is Calling You**

### **5 Minute Devotions about Calling for Youth Groups**

These devotions are meant to be used to help nurture calling in young people. They will speak of what it means to be called, how God calls, and where God can call us too. These can be used during a mission trip for devotional and reflection times or they can be expanded to be used for a full youth meeting or Sunday school lesson. Our prayer, though, is that they will be used so that calling can once again be spoken about in our churches and that young people are encouraged to recognize and accept what God is calling them to do.

### **Moses-God Calls You to Help Others**

Scripture: Exodus 3 (can also be expanded to include Exodus 4:1-17)

Key Verses: Exodus 3:9-10

God hears us when we cry to him. This passage makes that clear to us. When the people of God are in trouble, God hears it and will do something about it. In this case he is going to send a man to help his people, but some convincing has to take place in order for the man God has chosen to accept his task.

We know how this infamous story plays out after the burning bush. We know that Moses does lead the Israelites out of Egypt after many wonders and plagues occur by the hand of God. Yet the key to this story is not about how Moses does it, but what Moses is called to do. At the heart of Moses' calling is the call to help others. God is calling Moses to help the people of God. Granted, this call to help others requires Moses to face up to the most powerful person in the known world at that time and to try to get his people to follow his lead even though he has never lived among them. God never said that the calling to help others was easy, but he did promise Moses his assistance in doing so.

God calls us to help others. He may not tell us through a burning bush, but he does make needs in our community evident for us to see. For instance, have you ever seen a homeless person sitting on a street, or a food bank that has to close because it has too many people coming and cannot feed them all? If your church takes up clothes for a clothes bank, do you know the people who come to receive those clothes? These are modern day forms of the "burning bush" that God uses to get our attention to see the needs of others. Have you noticed any "burning bushes" around you lately pointing out needs that you could be called to do something about?

Today, be open to seeing the "burning bushes" around you. How can you help others that come into your path? How can you show the love of God to someone in need? Who is God calling you to help in his name today?

Prayer: God you reveal yourself to us in so many ways. Forgive us when we fail to see your guidance leading us to help the people around us. Thank you for placing these people in our lives so that we can learn what it means to serve you. Give us the wisdom to know who we need to help so that your love can be shared and revealed in them. Amen.

## **Isaiah-God Calls You to Speak a Message**

Scripture: Isaiah 6

Key Verse: Isaiah 6:8

The calling of the prophet Isaiah is probably one of the most preached and most recognizable call stories in the bible. Isaiah sees a vision of God in the temple where the robe of God's garment fills the whole place and the temple was shaking with the praise and worship of God by the heavenly beings. Isaiah realizes that he is too sinful to be able to witness such an event, but out of God's graciousness, he receives forgiveness and is cleansed from his unrighteousness. Then he heard God calling for someone willing to go and Isaiah quickly responds to the call. Little did he know what he was signing up for. In the next five verses, we read the message that Isaiah was being given to share, and it is certainly not an easy one.

God calls individuals to share a message from God with others. Sometimes that message is hard because it reveals a sin in a person/people's life. Other times the message can be hopeful and encouraging for a people to continue to move towards God in Christian discipleship. No matter what, though, God calls us to share the message of salvation, of Christ's love and sacrifice on the cross for our sins and his resurrection that brings us eternal life. God calls us all to a message. Are there people in your life that a message needs to be shared with? Is there a person who you will be around today that you will be given the opportunity to speak to about God and the salvation he brings? It could be a hard message for people to hear or it could be a hard message for you to share, but God calls us to tell it to all people. What message is God calling you to tell? Who is God calling you to speak to? Where is God calling you to share his message today?

Prayer: God, you are amazing and the story you have given us is one that should be heard. Forgive us for not sharing your message or following your Spirit when it beckons us to share. Thank you for your salvation and forgiveness. You have given us a message to be shared. Reveal to us the people we need to share it with and open up the door of opportunity for us to tell it to the people around us. Amen.

## **Esther: God Calls You to Be Bold**

Scripture: Esther 3:12-4:17

Key Verse: Esther 4:16

The book of Esther is one of the most interesting ones in the Bible. In the entire book, God is never mentioned at all, which probably makes this pick as a call story to be unusual. Though God does not specifically call Esther to the task, the faith heritage instilled in her as a child comes forth in this story. She learns from her uncle that the Jewish people, the people of God and the people she is a part of, are going to be killed. From her religious upbringing, Esther knows that it is through the Jews that the whole world would be blessed. They were the people of God and their continued existence was important. Not only that, but she was a Jew, and the edict to destroy the Jewish people would include her as well. Even though she had married the King, she remembered who she was and where she came from. Esther knew that something had to be done about the situation, but she also knew that to do something about it could be death.

The passage tells us that no one could see the King unless he summoned or invited them and if they came without being summoned or invited, they would be killed. Though, Esther was the Queen, she was subject to these rules as well which means that approaching her husband about the situation would be dangerous. Also, even if she could speak to the King about the situation, she would have to reveal her reasoning for saving the Jews, which means she would expose herself as a Jew. This could mean that the King could have her killed for revealing herself. Esther did not back away, though, when she saw her people were in trouble and she faced the situation with prayer and boldness.

God calls us to be bold as well. When we see a situation that needs to be handled; a wrong being done, a person who needs to be stood up for, a message that should be spoken, we should approach the situation with confidence. God desires us to be bold in whatever we are called to do, even when the end outcome seems bleak. Where there is something to be done, God calls someone to do it and we can be confident that God will be with us, no matter the outcome. What act of boldness is God calling you to today?

Prayer: God you are mighty and powerful in all your ways. Forgive us for when we do not have the confidence to act boldly in the power you bring to this world and to us. Thank you for your love in using us even when we are afraid of what could happen when we follow you and your guidance. Empower us to speak and act boldly in whatever you call us to do. Amen.

### **Ruth: God Calls You to Be Faithful**

Scripture: Ruth 1:15-18; Ruth 2

Key Verse: Ruth 1:16

Ruth is one of the great heroines of the Bible. We first meet her as she, her sister-in-law, and her mother-in-law are mourning the loss of their husbands and sons. Ruth had been with her husband's family for no less than ten years in her home country of Moab when her husband died. In biblical times, when a woman married, she would live with her husband's family and remain with them until death. After the death of their husbands, their mother-in-law, Naomi, had the desire to return to her people in the land of Judah. Naomi told her daughter-in-laws that they should return to their family and stay in their home country. Both girls fought against her at first, but eventually one of them did return to her family. Yet Ruth continued to refuse and eventually answered Naomi's pleas to return to her family with her own promise that she would remain with Naomi and that Naomi's people would be her people and Naomi's God would be her God. So she returned to Judah with Naomi and lived among Naomi's people.

Now during this time, Naomi and Ruth needed to eat, so Ruth went to the fields to glean behind the workers. Gleaning was a job where, a person would follow behind the harvesters of a field and pick up anything that was left behind. While she was working, the owner of the field, Boaz took notice of her. He had heard of her faithfulness to her mother-in-law and was impressed so he showed special favor to her out of many of the gleaners. When Naomi heard of this special favor, she told Ruth to stay in Boaz's fields and eventually encouraged Ruth to seek after Boaz as a husband. Long story short, Ruth gets the man and the descendants of Ruth and Boaz are King David and eventually, Jesus Christ.

Ruth did not know that her faithfulness would get her a new husband. She did not know her faithfulness would eventually change the entire world through her descendants. All Ruth knew was that she was to remain faithful to her family and to her God.

You will notice that God did not appear to her in a burning bush, or in a temple. God did not come down from heaven and tell Ruth exactly what she was supposed to do. Ruth was determined that no matter what, she was to be faithful and God blessed that faithfulness. What are you to be faithful too? Maybe there a person in your life that needs to here the good news of Jesus Christ? Perhaps your decision to be faithful in telling the story of God's love and grace will change that person's life and the spiral effect of that could change many more. Maybe there is a need that should be addressed around you; a family needs clothes, a child needs a friend, a homeless man needs some money. In what ways are you being called to be faithful in your everyday life? Keep this in mind today and remember the fruits of your faithfulness could eventually change the world.

Prayer: Lord, you are a faithful God who calls us to be faithful to your leadings. Forgive us for when we fail to follow faithfully after you. Thank you for your faithfulness as we learn what it means to be a faithful people willing to do your will in our lives. Give us the strength to listen and respond to you when you desire our faith to be lived out in our actions and in our lives. Amen.

### **Mary: God Calls You to Special Tasks**

Scripture: Luke 1:26-38

Key Verse: Luke 1:38a

Tradition holds that Mary was a teenager when she found out she was to give birth to the Son of God. This means that if Mary were in our modern world, she would be in the youth group. Imagine now that Mary was in your youth group. What if she came in one day and told us that an angel had appeared to her to tell her that she had been chosen to a special task and that the special task was to bear the Son of God. Most of us would think she was crazy. Well what if one of your friends in the youth group came in and said that he or she felt God calling them to go to Africa and live for two years to preach the Gospel to some of the indigenous tribes. What would you say to him or her?

The thing we learn from Mary's story is that God calls people to special tasks. Granted the chances of you being called to bear the Son of God are slim to none, but tasks just as important are still there for the taking. God designed each and every one of us for a special task that only we can do, because we are unique and each of us have distinct personalities and gifts that can be used to serve God. Mary's experience shows us how we are to respond to God when those special tasks are put before us. We are to respond to God knowing that we are God's servants and desire to live according to God's word.

What special tasks do you think God could be calling you to today? How can God use you in your comings and your goings? You may not be called to be the human means of helping the

God of salvation to enter the world, but you could be the one to reveal the God of salvation to someone you meet. Remember this today and tomorrow and the next day as you see how God has called and prepared you for a special task.

Prayer: God you are amazing for coming to earth in the form of a child and using a young person to do so. Forgive us when we fail to recognize our full potential in the special tasks you have prepared for us to do. Thanks for your forgiveness in helping us to realize where we have failed and for still offering us the chance to serve you. Open our eyes so that we may see the special tasks before us so that we can truly see you at work in us and in our world. Amen.

### **Saul: God Calls You to a New Life**

Scripture: Acts 9:1-22

Key Verse: Acts 9:18

When Saul, who we know as Paul, is traveling on the road to Damascus, he is on his way to arrest Christians and bring them back to Jerusalem to be tried and most likely killed. Saul meets God in a powerful way and is blinded. It is not until he has hands laid upon him by a Christian that he is allowed to see again. Yet the sight he gained when his eyes were re-opened was not the same sight he had before. What his eyes had seen before, the Christians as trouble-makers and people who should be done away with, was not what his eyes saw now, the Christians as a people who have a message of love and grace to be shared with all peoples. He opened his eyes to a new life where he whole-heartedly sought after God, preaching the gospel to as many people as he encountered and his labors opened the door for the gospel to be shared with the western world, ultimately with us. God called him out of a life of laws and rules into a new life of freedom; the freedom to live and serve God.

What are some of your favorite things to do? Going to the movies with friends, school activities, church activities (of course your favorite). Now think about when you agree to do some of these activities. Do you ever ask the question, "How is God being made known in my life through this activity?" Maybe you do not ask it that formally or out loud, but is the task of serving God something you consider in your decisions. The reason I ask this is because of the new life you are called to when you choose to follow God whole-heartedly. Because you choose to follow God, you are to consider what God wants you to do in your decisions and actions.

From the moment Saul received his sight he was committed to learning and serving God. The scales fell from his eyes and he saw the new life that stood before him. What new life have you been called to? Are there scales on your eyes that need to fall? What can you do to help you see more clearly the new life God has in store for you? What decisions or actions have you made or already done should change so that you can better embrace the new life offered to you by God? Are you currently living the new life?

Today, spend some time thinking about your life and the decisions you have made. See if they reflect the new life you received in Christ. Also see if there are chances for you to show others what the new life if Christ looks like. Be willing to let the scales fall off and let a whole new world of possibilities be before you.

Prayer: God you are awesome in all your ways. Forgive us when we fail to let the scales come off of our eyes to embrace the new life you have set before us. Thank you for sending your Son to die upon the cross so that we might live a life of freedom and service. Help us to take on this new life with a passion that leads us to proclaim your name to all people. By your authority, through the gift of your Son Jesus Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit, may our lives be made new! Amen.

### **The Disciples: God Calls You to Come!**

Scripture: Mark 1:14-20

Key Verse: Mark 1:17-18

Most stories we read about calling come are stories where God reveals himself to someone in some crazy way and they follow after some protest or they realize God is calling them based on experience. What is so unique about this story is that God does not call someone through burning bushes or visions, but by showing up himself. Jesus, the Son of God, called people. Jesus gathered his disciples around him to listen and learn and to be a witness to what God was doing in the world. Jesus called the people around him to come, which at first seemed like a simple task, but it turns into something much bigger than what could be seen at the time.

God calls everyone to come and follow him. That is how we are known as Christians, because we choose to follow Christ. We see from the example of the first disciples that this call is so strong it makes us leave whatever we are doing and follow after God in a passionate way. Is this something that you have done? What makes it hard to do?

There is a praise chorus sung in the church called "Come just as you are." The lyrics are, "Come just as you are, hear the Spirit's call. Come just as you are, come and see, Christ the King, come and live forever." God calls each and every one of us to follow him. The call to come and follow is something that gives us a gift, a gift of eternal life. When we answer the call to come and follow God, we are answering the call to receive the gift of eternal life that has been offered to us through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This call comes to us wherever we are at and desires us to answer. Is this a call you have truly answered in your life? Is the call to follow something that should be heard by some of the people around you? What can you do to help others accept the call of God to follow?

During the day today, be mindful of God's call to come and follow for yourself and for others. Perhaps you will be in a situation that you see the need for someone to respond to God's call to come. Remember this and perhaps you can be there when someone answers the call of God upon their life to come and follow. Perhaps that someone could be you.

Prayer: Father God, you called this world into existence with the words of your mouth. Forgive us when we fail to hear your words to us to come and follow after you without abandon. Thanks for loving us enough to send your Son to call us out of our complacency so that we can follow after you. Give us the ears to hear your call and the willingness to follow all our days. Amen.

## **Peter: God Calls you to take risks.**

Scripture: Matthew 14:22-36

Key Verse: 14:28-29

When we think of Christianity we should think of risk takers, and faith leapers. There are times in our life when we are called to step out of our comfort zone and take a risk, but do we seize those opportunities? Peter sees Jesus walking on water and wants to go to him and Jesus says "come." So Peter decides to step out of the boat onto water!!!! Peter is the only other man in history, besides Jesus of course, to walk on water. The faith Peter had in Jesus shows us how much we should trust Him.

God calls us all to take risk and sometimes taking risks forces us out of our comfort zone. It brings us out of our little box we like to hide in and lets us explore the unknown. Jesus tells Peter to "take courage, it is I; do not be afraid." Jesus wishes to tell us the same thing, do not be afraid to step out of the boat, do not be afraid to step out on faith, and do not be afraid to take a risk in my name. The task at hand may be difficult, it might seem out of reach, but look what Jesus does when Peter starts to sink. Peter starts to sink and cries out to Jesus "Lord save me!" When we start to fall, when we start to sink, or when we feel like we can't go on any farther cry out to Jesus, He will lift you up. Jesus will bring you out of the storm and comfort you.

God has a plan for each and every one of us, and it is up to us whether we follow that plan or not. Sometimes God's will is not easy, and sometimes God may call us to do extraordinary things in the name of Jesus. We must be open to God's call; we never know where that may lead us. God may call us into the mission fields, God may call us into Pastoral Ministry, God may call us into youth ministry, or God may call us to share our faith with our best friend, or even our family.

What is God calling you to do? What risk is God asking you to take? Jesus said "Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid." Who are you afraid to share your faith with? Who are you afraid to talk about Christ with? Step out of your comfort zone, and step out on faith.

*Prayer:* God thank you for showing us how to be risk takers. Help us to take a leap of faith and Trust in you. Help us to take courage and step out of our comfort zone and follow you. Forgive us for trying to do this alone. Give us strength and courage to be risk takers for your name. Amen.

## **The Great Commission: God calls you to make disciples**

Scripture: Matthew 28:16-20

Key Verse: Matthew 28:19

God calls us to go and make disciples. In order to understand the implications of this calling we should dissect the word disciple. What does the word disciple mean? A disciple is a follower of Christ, which is when someone follows Christ in all their ways. Following Christ means giving up some things, following Christ means loving unconditionally, following Christ means giving unconditionally. God calls all of us to be Christ like and to follow Him. Here in the Great Commission Jesus tells the disciples to go and make more disciples. Jesus doesn't say if you're not busy, or if you have time please make disciples. No, Jesus says GO and MAKE disciples of all nations. Go and teach others about the Messiah. Go and tell others the wonderful signs, and the wonderful things you have seen.

When we Go into the world, teaching and baptizing Jesus is with us always! Jesus says so in verse 20 "...and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Where ever we Go in Jesus name, where ever we teach, preach, and spread the good news of Jesus Christ He will be with us always. How do we make disciples/Christ followers? We make disciples by constant communication with God, studying scripture, loving others unconditionally, and by sharing our faith.

God calls us to tell others about His son Jesus, to share our faith. We might be the only Jesus some people see, what are we going to do about it? When is the last time you told someone about Jesus, or what Jesus means to you? When is last time you made a disciple of someone else?

*Prayer:* God thank you for sending your Son Jesus to show us how to live. Help us use His teachings and miracles to make disciples of all nations. Give us strength to Go and tell others the good news. Help us to share our faith with others, and help us tell others about our relationship with you. Amen.

### **Jeremiah: God calls you to serve**

Scripture: Jeremiah 1:1-10

Key verse: Jeremiah 1:6-8

How many of you feel too young to follow God fully? Or how many of you feel too young to go into the ministry? Look at Jeremiah he thought the same thing, when God tells Jeremiah "I have appointed you a prophet to the nations" and Jeremiah says "I am a youth" he is thinking how can you use me God, I am too young, nobody will listen to me, nobody will respect what I have to say, because I am too young.

Many of you are thinking, well I have the rest of my life to serve God and follow Him faithfully, but right now I just want to have fun and do what I want. If we follow God, I promise your life will be more rewarding. The cost may be great; you might have to give up distraction or temptations in your life that come between you and your relationship with God. The reason God doesn't want us to do these things is because God knows what is best for us. He knows what we need; God knows that if we give into these temptations

we will suffer, maybe not immediately but eventually. However if we serve God now He will deliver us, He will bless us, and He will teach us. God wants to use each and every one of us, no matter our age or shoe size.

Let God touch your heart, let God touch your mouth to use you for the building of His kingdom. Say yes to His call even if you're confused on where He is leading you. Isaiah didn't know exactly what God was calling him to do or where God wanted him to serve, he just said "Here am I, send me." Don't use the excuse that I'm too young, or I'm inexperienced, because excuses are like trash cans.... Everybody has one but they all stink.

Is God calling you to serve Him in some type of ministry? Are you open to that call no matter where it leads you? Or are you making excuses for yourself because you're simply scared? Jeremiah 1:8 "Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you."

*Prayer:* God thank you for all the blessings you have poured out. Lord touch our hearts, touch our lips, and help us to follow you always for the building of your Kingdom. Give us the words to speak and strengthen our hands and feet for service. In Jesus Name, Amen.